

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6-8, 10, 13, 14, 18 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Rupp. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, because the cited reference does not disclose or suggest the relationship between the first password for a first user's option and the second password for access protection, as now described in the claims.

In the present invention, a first user is able to protect access to information recorded on a medium with a second password and also selectively permit access to the information without the second password at the first user's option (using a first password). Accordingly, the invention includes a password preserving unit for preserving the first password for the first user's option and the second password for access protection. In this manner, if the first user opts to have the information recorded on a medium accessible by other people (without them knowing the password), the first password and the second password are made coincident as a prerequisite. When the user opts to inhibit others from accessing the information, the first password and the second password are made to be different as a prerequisite. As a result, the predetermined password (the second password) must be entered in order to access the information.

Rupp discloses a default password and a master password. If the user sets the default password once, it is continuously used after that and the need to enter a password every time the drive is locked is eliminated. The device of Rupp automatically locks the hard drive with the default password if no new password is entered when the locking is initiated

with a (Return) key. A master password is used by a supervisor. Once the master password is set, the supervisor can unlock any hard drive by using the master password regardless of the individual (default or otherwise) password.

Accordingly, Rupp teaches that once the default password is set, the user can enter the hard drive without repeatedly entering the password thereafter. The Rupp reference, however, does not disclose or suggest that a password preserving unit preserves a first password for the user's option (to allow access without a password) and the second password for access protection. The reference also does not disclose or suggest, when an access authorization is requested without entering a password, comparing the first password (which determines whether the information can be accessed by others without a password) with the second password (which is the access protection password), and if in agreement, issuing an authorization or refusing authorization if not in agreement.

In the preset invention, by setting the first password and the second password to the same value, an access authorization can be issued even if the access authorization is requested without entering the second password. Also, by setting the first password and the second password to different values, the access authorization is refused when the authorization is requested without entering the second password.


Claims 15-17 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Rupp in view of Bellmore et al. Independent claims 15 and 21 have also been amended to more clearly describe the relationship between the first password and the

second password as described above. Accordingly, this rejection is also traversed for the reasons given above.

For the foregoing reasons, applicants believe that this case is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The examiner should call applicants' attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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